

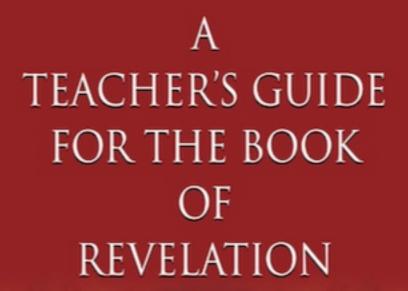
Commentary of new testament. Verse by verse study - Book of Revelation. Study of the New Testament, Book of Revelation.

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR THE BOOK OF REVELATION

VERSE -BY- VERSE STUDY AN EXCITING LEARNING EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE BOOK OF REVELATION by JAMES A. LOWE

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Verse-by-Verse Study

AN EXCITING LEARNING EXPERIENCE THROUGH

the

BOOK OF REVELATION

JAMES A. LOWE

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CHAPTER ONE GOD'S DISCLOSURE OF FUTURE EVENTS

Verse 1-2

VERSE: 1 "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His Bond Servants, the things which must shortly come to pass; And He sent and communicated it by His angel, to His bond servant, John."

First, we see this "*Revelation*" was given to Jesus Christ from God; then, Christ gave this Revelation to an angel; and then, finally, it was given to John. These things were first given to Jesus to "Show unto his servants, all these things which must shortly come to pass."

The term, "Shortly," in the original Greek text, means, "Rapidity of Action," once there is a beginning; this doesn't mean that the events described will necessarily occur soon, but when they do begin to happen, they will come to pass swiftly, or the original text says, "Speedily".

VERSE 2-I, (John), emphasized here, "Bore witness to the word of God and to the Testimony of Jesus, even to all that He saw."

This is simply saying that John, despite all of his warnings from the Emperor to stop preaching; he continued anyway.... And this is how he ended up being banished to the "Isle of Patmos."

Christ speaks:

VERSE: 3 – Blessed is He who reads, and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it for the time is near, or the KJV Bible, says "at hand"....

Verse: 3 – We see by this verse that the "Apocalypse" is not some deep, mysterious, confusing book. I know that we receive a blessing from reading any part of God's Word.... But this is the only verse that promises a "Special Blessing," so we see here that, the Book of Revelation is both a source of happiness and blessing.

If ever a generation needed to hear, read, and study the Book of Revelation... It is certainly ours. *We are the generation, I believe, that* are living now, when the things that John describes are "at hand," meaning they are "Imminent" and could come to pass at any moment.

These events could happen immediately, within the next ten minutes, ten months, or ten years....

The word "imminence" always means "at hand" when speaking about the return of the Lord. For example, Romans 13:12 says, "The night is far spent. The Day is "at hand" (Imminent); Philippians 4:5 declares, "Let your moderation be known unto men. The Lord is "at hand".

So, the next event on God's calendar, the *Return of Christfor HisChurch*, could occur at any moment.

JOHN WRITES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

VERSE: 4 "John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and Peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the Seven Spirits which are before His throne".

John now focuses his attention on **the Seven Churches** located in an area known at the time as Asia. This is not the Asia that we know and recognize today.Now, it is a portion of what we know as "Turkey".

Only seven churches are mentioned, although there were undoubtedly more in existence at the time. Seven is God's number of perfection. The number seven occurs 54 times in the Book of Revelation and

appears more frequently than any other number. In the Bible, the number seven is tied very closely to "Completion", "Fulfillment", and Perfection.

In the Revelation, there are 7- Churches and 7- Spirits,7- Lamp stands, 7- Stars, 7- Seals, the Scroll, 7- Horns and 7- Eyes of theLamb,7- Angels and 7- Trumpets, 7- Thunders, 7-Heads of theDragon,7- Heads of the Beast, 7-Golden Bowls, and 7-kings;

The Seven Spirits refers to the *Holy Spirit in his perfect fullness*. (Isaiah11:2);

The Seven Spirits are named as follows: (1) The Spirit of the Lord, (2) The Spirit of Wisdom and (3) Understanding, (4) The Spirit of Counsel and (5) Strength, (6) The Spirit of Knowledge and the (7) Fear of the Lord; This particular list explains the complete operation of the Seven Spirits which are "Before the Throne" and refers to the "seven ministries" of the Holy Spirit in all of its fullness.

Next, is God's salutation; this salutation is found in 19 of the 27 books of the New Testament and is found in this verse; "Grace be unto you, and Peace". Notice it's not "Peace and Grace" but "Grace and Peace". This is God's program for sinners. They cannot have peace until He has shown them His marvelous grace.

This grace is bestowed upon all who believe and receive Christ as their Savior and Lord, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of GOD: Not of works, lest any man should boast' (Ephesians 2: 8 - 9).....Only Jesus can give this Peace!

THE FIRST BEGOTTEN FROM THE DEAD.

VERSE: 5 "And from Jesus, the faithful witness and the "first begotten" (first born) of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the

earth, to Him who loves us and washed us from our sins by His own blood."

Why is Christ the "First Begotten" From the Dead, when Lazarus and others were raised first? The answer is simple: Others were raised back to a "physical" life, but only to die again. Jesus Christ was raised from the dead to "Immortality", never to die again.

Christ was the first to receive a resurrection body which, of course, is immortal. He is the "First Fruits" of those who will be raised from the dead when Christ returns for the church. "He is the first born of every creature, that in all things He may have preeminence" (Colossians 1: 15-18).

A ROYAL FAMILY OF KINGS AND PRIESTS.

VERSE: 6 " And (He) hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and His Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever, and ever, Amen!"

Verses 5 & 6 contain *three glorious statements* concerning Christ's work on our behalf: First of all, *He Loves us*, (2), secondly, *He washed us* from our sins with His own blood; and (3) thirdly, *He hath made us Kings and Priests unto GOD and His Father*.

LOOK AT THE ORDER:

First, the Lord had to "love us" before He washed us and made us Kings and Priests. The word "love" here is in the present tense, meaning that He continues loving those He has washed; this love is forever;

That is why Paul declared in (Romans 8: 37-39) ... "NAY, in all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heights, nor

depth, nor any other things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of GOD, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord"!

Secondly, He "washed us"! "Not by any works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy He saved us by the washing of our sins by His own blood (Titus 3:5);

When we trust in the merits of Christ's shed blood, our sins are gone, "As far as the East is from the West, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalms 103: 12);

Thirdly, because of His love and the washing of our sins, Christ is able to make us Kings and Priests unto God and His Father. Think about it, He has made us Kings and Priests! This is the title of every believer; it's also the reason we don't need a human intercessor to ask forgiveness of our Sins, because as a believer, and as a Priest, we can go straight to the Lord ourselves and bring our own petitions to God and ask for his forgiveness; "We should show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into the light" (1st Peter 2:1)...... WHAT A CALLING...

EVERY EYE WILL SEE HIM

VERSE: 7 "Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all the kindred's of the earth shall wail because of Him, even so, AMEN!"

This verse announces the Lord's return to earth. "Christ is coming again"! The angelic messenger in (Acts 1:11) said, "This same Jesus who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven"

Notice that *every eye sees Him*! That is why this "Great Appearing" is described as a "Revelation" of Christ and occurs when He comes back to this earth as the King of kings and Lord of lords! (Rev. 19:11-16).

This does not mean only those who are on earth at the time will see Him. It means, "Every Eye". Jesus himself said to Caiaphas, the High Priest, "But I say unto all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the Right Hand of the LORD and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26: 64).

Even those who are in *Hades* will see Him; even those "*Who Pierced Him*"; meaning all those who participated in the crucifixion of Jesus will face Him again.

Furthermore, when He comes in all of his Power and Great Glory to "Smite the Nations", all kindred's of the earth shall wail because of him". Because this time He is coming for judgment and none will escape.

Here as "John envisions the hour when the Lord returns to earth with tens of thousands of His Saints" (Jude 14), He cries victoriously "Amen and Amen!" The Greek word for "Even So" is "Amen" and the "Amen" in the Hebrew is for "Even So". John is literally shouting a loud praise to God in two languages, as he says, "Amen and Amen", HE is coming!

THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA

Now, let's look at Verses -8 - 10

VERSE 8: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty"!

This text speaks of the "Eternal" Christ. Alpha and Omega are the beginning and ending of the Greek text. Christ is saying here, "I am the beginning and ending of all things". Notice he uses the title, "I Am", which is a verb indicating a "being". He always was. He was

before all things and created all things. "All things were made by him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3).

He adds the term, "*The Almighty*", a name used for the Father in connection with His person. This term is used 48 times in the Old Testament.

JOHN SPEAKS ABOUT HIS SUFFERINGS

Now, on to Verse-9

VERSE: 9 "I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in the tribulation, and the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ, was in the Isle that was called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ".

As we said, John was a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos, exiled because of his witness for Christ. His commitment to Jesus caused him to be punished. This reminds us that in this age of grace, we have the unlimited opportunity to speak for Jesus, to proclaim the Word of God. As a Christian we should be living witnesses for Christ.

John identified with those to whom he wrote: "Who also am your brother, and companion". "WE ARE IN THIS THING TOGETHER! WE ARE PART OF THE SAME ASSIGNMENT." God has given us the same privilege and we are companions "In the Tribulation".

This is not the same Tribulation that he talks about later. But it seems in all ages, those who have tried to live for Christ have always suffered persecution and tribulation. Paul said, "All that will live Godly for Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2Tim. 3: 12).

The church, under Roman control was a church in tribulation and under great stress. John said, "I am with you in it. I am with you in the patience and kingdom of Jesus Christ".

I believe this patience and kingdom of Jesus Christ is a Spiritual kingdom. He was talking about those of us, who are in the family of God, those of us who share the same assignment under God. We are in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

In the Isle of Patmos (V-9), John was in exile. He spoke out too often, and they got rid of him. They were smart enough, however, not to make a martyr out of him, they just sent him away.

So there he was, separated from his loved ones, marooned on a barren, rocky island. This was a terrible thing for John. But it wasn't long before John shouts, "Glory!".... God opens the door of eternal truth for him, and what seemed at the time to be a bitter, disappointing experience, of persecution and tribulation, God turns it into the greatest experience of his life! Through all of this, he gave us an unprecedented picture of Jesus Christ!

Sometimes we go through experiences that are dark and dismal. Sometimes there is heartache and disappointment. However, Life has a way of moving on, and we find that the things we have clung to have changed and are not what they used to be.

During these times in the midst of disappointment and despair, we should not let Satan rob us of what could be the greatest experience of life.

It may be in these moments that God may reveal the greatest thing about himself to us. That's what happened to John....What a blessing!

Now, let's move on to verses 10 through 18....

CHRIST APPEARS TO JOHN

VERSES 10 -18: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: What thou sees, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden Candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps (chest) with a golden girdle.

His head and His hairs were like white wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength.

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me," Fear Not, I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death" (v.v.10-18).

This is a beautiful description of Worship. John said, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (v.10). There are two phrases, one in verse -9 and one in verse -10, that seem to relate. In verse - 9 he says he was in the Isle of Patmos. In verse -10, he says he was in the Spirit.

Well, where was he, in the Isle, or in the Spirit... "Both"..... He was worshipping.

I think every true Christian lives in two locations, "Don't You"? We live in a specific place physically, and in a Spiritual place; *in heavenly places*. We have our citizenship in two countries. There is a human, earthly environment in which we live and a heavenly environment in which we live.

Paul, in Colossians 1:2, talked about Christians who were "In Christ," but were "at Colossae." Where were they, In Christ or at 'Colossae'? **BOTH...** They had an earthly address and a heavenly address. We need to remind ourselves of this same thing from time to time..... We, too, have two addresses.

John was in the Isle of Patmos and in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. There are *several possible interpretations of the "Lord's Day."* Some thinks it refers to Sunday, the first day of the week. Some believe it refers to the *Day of the Lord*, meaning that God had transported him to a place where he was able to see the events that will all come together in the last days.

I will suggest he was in the Spirit on Sunday and God gave him a glimpse of the Day of the Lord. He was worshipping on Sunday. He was talking to God, and praying to God, and God gave him the divine experiences he describes for us in this book.

What did he see in his worship experience? ---- I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega." (v. v. 10-11).

He had already said that earlier in this chapter. It is just a reminder that anything and everything is found in Jesus Christ. He is the source of all Wisdom and Human Knowledge.

"What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia" (vs. 11).

The ease of travel and the roads that tied them together made it logical that these would be the churches John would choose. I believe there were seven churches, along with many more, but I believe he chose these churches to illustrate *the truth that is revealed with the number seven*. Conditions that existed in those churches also exist in our churches of today. What happened in those churches in John's day helps us to examine what is happening in the churches we attend?

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks" (vs12). As we have already said, "the Book of Revelation has much symbolism in it......But it also explains itself. In verse 20, he speaks of the mystery of the seven stars and the seven golden candlesticks. Then he explains it. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. The seven candlesticks" are the seven churches. He saw seven churches. "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment, down to the foot" (vs.13). Then, through vs. 16, He is described.

LET'S START WITH THE CANDLESTICKS (KJV)

We have already said that the candlestick was the symbol for the churches. A candlestick, by itself does not originate light. It only helps to give it. If we have a candlestick (or a lamp stand - KJV); we must get the light from somewhere else to shine for the candlestick.

The candlestick itself does not have any light...it's the believers inside the church who reflect Christ and that gives us the light. In other words, the light we have is the light of Christ.

If we have anything to offer to the world, it is nothing of ourselves, but the light of God inside of us. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). We are to be a reflector of his light.

He called them "Golden candlesticks". Gold, in the Word of God, is always a symbol of the "Glory of God". Here are seven golden candlesticks. This terminology tells us then that the church is to give "the light to a dark world "and Glory to God. That is our purpose. WE are to give glory to God and to reflect his light.

"The Son of Man" is none other than Jesus Christ. The term, "Son of Man", is an Old Testament term that was always used to apply to the Messiah. It is a prophetic term. When Jesus claimed to be the Son of

Man (and that was his favorite name for himself), he was picking up an Old Testament reference to the Messiah.

Here he is seen in the midst of the churches, where he ought to be always. Where God's people are gathered together, Jesus should be in their midst.

They are to reflect him. Their attitudes, actions and words to each other and to the world are to be consistent with Jesus Christ, who is in the midst of the candlesticks.

Christ is the head and central power of the church. Christ is in the church, and Christ loves the church. If we love Jesus, we will love the church also because that is where the heart of Christ is always found.

He was clothed from head to foot and had a girdle (sash) about his paps (chest). The average person in that day did not dress like that, only a Priest, King or a Judge. Jesus is dressed as a King and Priest walking among the candlesticks.

What was Jesus doing? A letter to one of the churches tells us that he was trimming the candlesticks, making sure they gave good light. But he was not just maintaining the lamps. He was evaluating them----Judging their fitness for service. He had the golden snuffers with him to snuff out the light and remove the candlestick, if necessary. Jesus was carefully examining the life of these churches. WE WILL GET INTO THIS A LITTLE MORE AS WE GET INTO THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Let's move on:

"His head and his hairs were like white wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire" (v.14). Then, look at Daniel's view of the coming Messiah; "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did Sit." (Dan.vv. 7-9).

When we think about "White Hair", we think of the aging process...That is not what this passage means. It refers to the agelessness of Christ (who never grows old), and "whose garment was as white as snow, and the hair on his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire" (Dan. v.v.7-9).

Compare those verses in Daniel to these in Revelation. Revelation says his hair was white as wool, white as snow; his eyes were as a flame of fire......and in the Book of Daniel, we see 'almost' exactly the same description of the agelessness of Christ himself explained again.

White symbolizes the absolute purity and the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ. The only way we can be cleansed from the foulness and the evil of our sins is through Jesus Christ himself, and no other, even as Isaiah 1:18 declares, "His shed blood alone can cleanse us from the vileness of sin.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire" (v.14). The Greek text says that his eyes literally "shot fire". Christ was certainly indignant and thoroughly upset about something. Whenever a church is not what it ought to be, it does upset Christ and arouses his indignation.

We, personally, don't seem to get too upset about it. In fact.... it's almost like we get accustomed to our apathy, and indifference. This infuriates Christ.

The scripture tells us that He does become indignant about it. Flames of fire come from his eyes. We might say...that Christ, as the returning Lord, has X-ray vision. We cannot hide anything from him. We may be able to hide things from everybody else, but we cannot hide anything from him. Everything is exposed by his piercing eyes. No one can escape his scrutiny.

It is easy for us to compare our church to other churches. But it is a fearful and sobering thing to go under the X-ray vision of Jesus Christ. In that light, we do not seem to fare as well.

John spoke more about his feet. His robe went down to his feet but did not cover his feet; "And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters" (Rev. 1:15).

Brass is the symbol of two things in the Bible: "Judgment and Strength". Remember when God brought judgment upon the Children of Israel, He sent 'fiery serpents' into the camp. And when the deliverance came, He said, "Put a brass 'serpent' on a pole" (Num.21:7-9). That was a sign of deliverance and of the Judgment of God

It is always this way through the Word of God. The fine brass is a symbol of strength and endurance, and the firmness of God's judgment. His feet were not bound. That could represent an "untied", Holy Walk" as well as the powerful triumph of judgment in the person of Jesus Christ.

His voice was the "sound of many waters" (v15). If you have ever stood by a waterfall....then, you will understand....you can't hear anything else but the 'roar of the water'......If you are near a person, you have to 'yell at the other person'. It's amazing how loud the roar of the water can be!..... So it is with God's voice!

God has been mostly silent now for a long time, but when He does decide to speak, everything else will grow silent! It will be just like standing next to the waterfall....you won't be able to 'hear anything' but the Voice of God! "The sound of many waters is going to come"!

JOHN IS TALKING HERE

"And He had in His right hand, Seven Stars" (v.16). These stars in Verse20 refer to the angels of the seven churches. The word angel, here in the Greek text is 'angelos.' It is translated both "angel "and "messenger". Sometimes it refers to a heavenly or supernatural messenger, sometimes to a human messenger. Personally, I think the angel he is talking about here is the 'pastor', or pastors of the seven churches.

According to the book of Ephesians, God looks at pastors as gifts to His churches. They are his "messengers"; and if a church is what it is supposed to be, the messenger of God needs to be held in the right hand of the Son of man.

"Out of his mouth went a sharp two- edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength" (v16). That two-edged sword is a reference to the Word of God. The Word of God in Hebrews 4:12 are SYMBOLIC and are described as a sharp two-edged sword. A sword will either save us or kill us, depending upon how it is used. If we need protection, a sharp two-edged sword can protect us. On the other hand, if someone really wanted to, they could kill us...

The Word of God will either save us or slay us. We have come to a day when men seem to want to play around with the Word of God and make it say whatever they want it to say. However, the Word of God they want to play around with will one day Judge them and slay them.

"His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength" (v16). This is the last picture we have before John fell down before Christ. We cannot look at the sun. Our natural eye cannot stand it. There is a good reason for this. The Sun is much too bright for a person to look at it with his naked eye. We cannot look at a force that is so strong and so bright, much less approach it. So it was with the apostle John.

When John saw Jesus, he said his countenance was as the sun; and he knew exactly what to do. "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead" (v.17). What else could he do? When we approach a force so strong, so bright, there is nothing to do, like John; we fall at his feet as dead. He instantly fell before Jesus' feet.

We hear people all the time take the name of Jesus in vain, use it flippantly, and seem to want to make a mockery of it. But there will come a day when Christ comes back to this earth with a countenance as bright as the sun, their only response will be "to fall at his feet".

"And he laid his right hand upon me" (v17). The right hand has always symbolized supreme authority. In a court of law, we are required to raise our right hand. There is something even in our secular culture, about the strength of the right hand.

"Fear not, I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and death" (v.v.17-18). Jesus has the keys of death and to hell. As Christians, we do not have to walk that lonesome valley by ourselves. He told us not to fear.

Jesus is in absolute control over 'death and hell', and all the forces that would oppose us. John has painted us a beautiful picture of worship. No wonder we wouldn't want to stop and "Shout Halleluiah, What a Savior?" John views the coming Messiah and falls on his face in worship before him... "Don't you think we would too"?

WRITE THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN

VERSE: 19; this verse gives us the complete order of the Book of Revelation, which is written chronologically, or as events happen. One immediately recognizes the three tenses ---Past---Present, and Future.

"Write the things which thou hast seen-- Chapter 1-The Past;-- Chapters 2 and 3 - The Present; "The things which are"-- and Chapters 4 - through 22. ---- The things which shall be hereafter---- The Future,

So, let's begin by looking at Verses - 19-20:

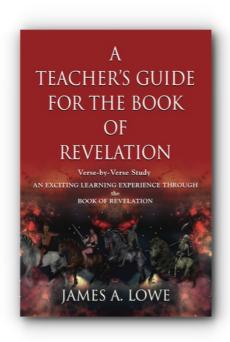
VERSES: 19-20: "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; 'the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches (vv19-20).

John lived in a day in an extreme expectancy of the imminent return of Christ. The Lord's return is always "Imminent".

It is not always not immediate, but "*Impending*". It was imminent in John's day, but in looking back, we see it was not immediate.

John viewed his coming as "near", like it could happen at any time, and so should we! And so..... "We Wait"....and while we wait we must wait intelligently, not flippantly, or carelessly. We need to ask God everyday for "his understanding" of these last days while we anxiously await his return. We need to pray that we will be a people to whom our Lord can say, "Well done, you served me well". Enter into the joy of your Lord" (see Matt. 25:21).

Now, we move on to the study of the seven churches!



Commentary of new testament. Verse by verse study - Book of Revelation. Study of the New Testament, Book of Revelation.

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